

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 04437 051835Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
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S E C R E T CAIRO 4437

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR IS ET EG
SUBJECT: GOE CONCERN RE ALLEGED RETURN OF ISRAELI EXPERTS
TO ETHIOPIA

REF: (A) CAIRO 2307, (B) CAIRO 3612, (C) CAIRO 3880

1. MFA UNDERSECRETARY AHMED OSMAN TACKLED ME
LAST NIGHT TO INQUIRE IF I HAD ANY REPLY TO HIS
EARLIER QUERY ABOUT ISRAELI EXPERTS IN ETHIOPIA
CARRYING US PASSPORTS. I SAID I HAD HAD NONE,
BUT PERSONALLY TENDED TO DOUBT THE STORIES.

2. OSMAN WAS CLEARLY A BIT SUSPICIOUS ABOUT OUR
FAILURE TO RESPOND TO HIS QUERY. NOTING THAT
THE ETHIOPIANS TOLD THE EGYPTIANS THAT THEY HAVE
NO ISRAELI EXPERTS, HE SAID GOE DOES NOT BELIEVE
THIS DENIAL. STORY OF ISRAELI EXPERTS CARRYING
US PASSPORTS PERSISTS, AND HE WONDERED IF THE
ISRAELIS MAY HAVE SENT PERSONNEL WHO ARE DUAL
NATIONALS AND STILL CARRY US PASSPORTS.

3. IF THE ISSUE IS SIMPLY ONE OF ISRAELIS BEING
IN ETHIOPIA, GOE WILL HANDLE THIS WITH ETHIOPIAN
AUTHORITIES. RECENT ETHIOPIAN DELEGATION MADE
MUCH OF ITS DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS WITH
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EGYPT. GOE IS AGREEABLE IN PRINCIPLE, BUT

WILL GO SLOW UNTIL IT IS CONVINCED THE ETHIOPIANS
HAVE NOT INVITED ISRAELI EXPERTS TO RETURN.
IF SUCH ISRAELIS ARE CARRYING US PASSPORTS, THIS
ADDS A NEW DIMENSION OT THE PROBLEM. HE HOPED
STORY WAS UNTRUE, BUT AGAIN ASKED THAT I SOLICIT
ANY INFORMATION THAT THE DEPT MAY HAVE.

4. COMMENT: WHILE I RECOGNIZE SUBJECT IS
SENSITIVE, I THINK IT IS IN OUR OWN INTEREST
TO GIVE SOME SORT OF A RESPONSE. OUR CONTINUED
FAILURE TO DO SO IS ONLY HEIGHTENING EGYPTIAN
SUSPICIONS. OSMAN, INCIDENTALLY, IS NOW SUPERVISING
UNDERSEC FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS.
EILTS

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NNN

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